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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/982,654	10/18/2001	Brian K. Kirkpatrick	TI-31459	8114

23494 7590 04/23/2003

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EXAMINER

KEBEDE, BROOK

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2823

DATE MAILED: 04/23/2003

3

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/982,654

Applicant(s)

KIRKPATRICK ET AL.

Examiner

Brook Kebede

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 October 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 12-19 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,6 and 9-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3,5,7 and 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1, 2, 9, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cowely et al. (US/2002/0088476).

Re claim 1, Cowely et al. disclose a method for fabricating an integrated circuit, comprising the steps of forming a low-k dielectric (not labeled) layer over a semiconductor body; treating said low-k dielectric layer with a reducing plasma; treating said low-k dielectric layer with a wet solution; forming a resist pattern over said low-k dielectric layer; and etching said low-k dielectric layer using said resist pattern (see Abstract; Page 1 Paragraph 0017 and Page 2 Paragraphs 0021-0023).

Re claim 2, as applied to claim 1 above, Cowely et al. disclose wherein said reducing plasma comprises H₂ and N₂ (see Abstract)

Re claim 9, as applied to claim 1 above, Cowley et al. disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said low-k dielectric layer comprises organosilicate glass (see Abstract; Page 1 Paragraph 0017 and Page 2 Paragraphs 0021-0023) .

Re claim 11, as applied to claim 1 above, Cowley et al. disclose all the claimed limitations including the limitation wherein said treating step removes said resist pattern as a

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pattern re work step ~~XXXX~~ (see Abstract; Page 1 Paragraph 0017 and Page 2 Paragraphs 0021-0023).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. Claims 4, 6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cowley et al. (US/2002/0088476) in view of Geha et al. (US/5,968,851).

Re claims 4, 6 and 10, as applied to claim 1 above, Cowley et al. disclose all the claimed limitations except wherein said wet solution comprises HF comprises solvent.

Geha et al. disclose a method of treating the polished dielectric layer using HF solution comprises solvent prior formation of resist pattern in order to enhance the lateral-to-vertical wet etch ratio (see Abstract).

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant(s) claimed invention was made to have provided Cowley reference with treating the dielectric layer with HF wet treatment solution comprises solvent prior as taught by Geha et al. because the lateral-to-vertical wet etch ratio would have been improved.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 12-19 are allowed over prior art of record.
6. Claims 3, 5, 7 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure Hsieh et al. (US/5,880,019), Chen (US/5,970,376), Lai et al. (US/6,136,680), Huang (US/6,177,364), Smith et al. (US/2002/0127840), and Aoki et al. (US/6,465,352) also disclose similar inventive subject matter.

Correspondence

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brook Kebede whose telephone number is (703) 306-4511. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5 Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Olik Chaudhuri can be reached on (703) 306-2794. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7722 for regular communications and (703) 308-7722 for After Final communications.

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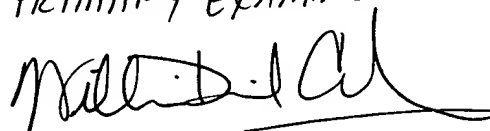
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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Brook Kebede

BK
April 20, 2003

W. DAVID COLEMAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. David Coleman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.